



# Lesson 1: Identity Awareness

How Does My Identity Shape My Experience in America?

## Activity 1: Who Am I?

How do we start to understand different life experiences?

### Objective:

Students examine what constitutes an identity.

### Procedure:

- ✓ Have students create individual journals (distribute notebooks, journals or blank pages for students to assemble and staple together).
- ✓ Take digital images of each student to paste in his/her journal.
- ✓ As questions arise during this unit, ask students to write them at the bottom of a journal page.
- ✓ As a class, define the word culture. Write all possible answers on the board. The following example may serve as a starting point:

*Culture can be defined through language, dance, food, customs and social norms.*

- ✓ Have your class create one definition for culture and write it in their journals.
- ✓ Read the following questions to your students and have the students write responses in their journals:

*Who are you? Is your identity made up of your eye color, your shoe size, your favorite video game or book? Is your identity defined by your family size, the music you listen to, the food you eat, your favorite hobby, who you associate with, or your dream profession? Do all of these concepts make up your identity? Use the definition of culture to help you define your identity.*

*Do you feel your friends or classmates would describe you differently than you describe yourself? If so, how?*

*How does your identity or experience affect your opportunities in life?*

*Do you feel your experience in America today is different than it would have been in the 1940s? If so, how?*



Education Week at Manzanar, Ansel Adams 1943

**Grade Level:** 10 & 11

**Time:** 90 minutes

### Materials:

Student journals  
Internet access  
Densho member login  
Blank ID Tags

### Concepts Covered:

**Write** for detail.

**Understand** elements of journal writing.

**Support** observations with specific detail.

**Relate** personal characteristics and modern points of view to the past.

### CDE Standards:

#### 10th Grade

**English/Language Arts Writing**

2.1

**History-Social Science**

10.8.6

#### 11th Grade

**English/Language Arts Writing**

2.1 2.3

**History-Social Science**

11.7.5

Activity 1: **Who Am I?**

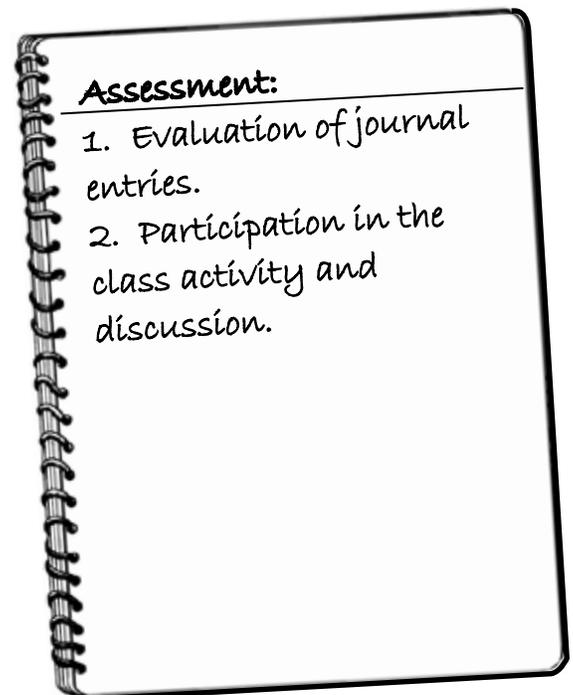
How do we start to understand different life experiences?

**Procedure (continued):**

- ✓ Share the following portrait of adolescent experiences in the 1940s. Visit Densho's online archive at [www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org) (obtain a free login one week prior to the assignment). Click on the Archive section titled Visual History Collections, Manzanar Collection. Select Dennis Bambauer and listen to or read his oral history interview section *Memories of Being Taken from Orphanage to Manzanar as a Child* (1 minute and 42 seconds). In addition, click on Densho's Visual History Collection, select May K. Sasaki and listen to or read her oral history interview section *Feeling Ashamed of Being Japanese American: Changing Name from "Kimiko" to "May"* (2 minutes 51 seconds). Ask your students to revisit the previous list of questions and apply them to the lives of Dennis and May. Ask what they think shaped Dennis' and May's identities (Dennis is in the *Remembering Manzanar* film).
- ✓ Have each student ask two classmates to describe him/her and journal their depictions. Provide your students with the following questions to stimulate discussion:

*How many siblings do you imagine he/she has?*  
*What do you think his/her favorite type of music is?*  
*What do you think is his/her favorite activity/hobby?*  
*What do you think his/her future career will be?*  
*How do cultural customs and/or traditions define him/her?*

- ✓ Have the groups volunteer to share their answers with the class. Ask your students if they feel their classmates' responses are accurate. Do they feel these descriptions define their identity and culture?
- ✓ Discuss personal identities versus perceived identities.
- ✓ Have the class divide into small groups to answer the following question: How does your identity shape America's identity? Students share examples with the class.
- ✓ Ask students to create their own ID tags, using the format provided in the Lesson 1 Activity 1 Resources. On the back of their ID tags, have students write one thing about themselves that no one would know by looking at them. Conclude with a final discussion on the concepts of perception and reality in regards to identity.





Activity 1: **Who Am I?**

ID Tags

Cut and distribute one tag to each student. Have the students write a brief description of themselves on the back of their tags. *Option: Attach strings to the tags so students may tie the tags to their clothing.*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**Family No.**

YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO REPORT  
READY TO TRAVEL ON:

TO BE RETAINED BY PERSON  
TO WHOM ISSUED

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